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VI. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR AND RELATED MATTERS AND THE FUTURE OF UNDP

B. Related matters: the role of UNDP in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

1. The Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa introduced the report on the role of UNDP in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) (DP/1995/35). She outlined the elements of the programme, citing the commitments of both African countries and their development partners. Results to date had been mixed. Africa had not yet been able to move towards achieving the accelerated transformation, integration, diversification and growth envisaged by the compact. She noted that the international community had not yet met the goals of a $75 million diversification fund. The Assistant Administrator also outlined UNDP work in Africa in the fields of poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS, environmental protection and food security, as well as UNDP involvement in international initiatives and conferences relating to furthering economic development in Africa.

2. Several delegations emphasized that while some overall progress had been seen, there was an urgent need to support development efforts in Africa, particularly in those countries classified as least developed countries (LDCs). France, on behalf of the European Union, underlined the priority accorded to Africa, which received one half of the Union's development assistance. Support was expressed for the work of the United Nations and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa, especially through the resident coordinator system. With reference to UN-NADAF, delegations underlined the important role of UNDP in capacity development, policy formulation, and in good governance and popular participation. It was essential for programmes to be effective and relevant.

UNDP was urged to maintain a country-driven approach, keeping in mind the priorities of recipient countries.

3. Many speakers referred to the urgent need to increase resource flows to the region, especially in support of national strategies. One delegation asked about the possibilities for enhancing the mobilization of non-core resources. Delegations highlighted the importance of strengthening institutional capacities, improved governance, human resource development, work in rural areas, private sector development, South-South cooperation, training, and encouragement of the participation of non-governmental organizations, with some speakers elaborating on initiatives undertaken by their own Governments. The negative effects of debt-servicing remained a serious problem for African countries, with more debt relief needed. Disadvantages in international trade and drought and desertification also remained specific problems for the region.

4. The Assistant Administrator thanked the Executive Board for its positive comments and suggestions and support for the work of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa. She informed the Board that the Panel of High-Level Personalities on African Development offered advice on the implementation of UN-NADAF, and would also provide inputs to various initiatives, such as that of the Secretary-General through the Administrative Committee on Coordination. She cited three reasons for the sharp decline in expenditures in Africa during the fifth programming cycle: (a) a high level of expenditure shown for the first year, owing to the practice of front-loading and borrowing against the next programming cycle, which had to be compensated for in 1994 in the context of a reduced indicative planning figure (IPF); (b) the change of UNDP focus to sustainable human development through the programme approach entailed lengthy design and formulation process; and (c) severe circumstances and lack of capacity in some countries.

5. The Assistant Administrator outlined the support UNDP provided to 26 countries in the area of governance. UNDP would participate in the high-level segment of ECOSOC on the development of Africa, including the implementation of UN-NADAF, and had contributed to the report prepared for the session by the United Nations Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. A good understanding had been reached between UNDP and the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund regarding the respective activities of the three organizations in Africa. In 1995, five round-table conferences had been held, including a highly successful one for Rwanda, in which $600 million had been mobilized. National Human Development Reports were under preparation in several African countries.

6. The UNDP Resident Representative in Zaire noted the involvement of UNDP in the preparation of country strategy notes (CSNs) in 15 African countries, a useful tool for strengthening the resident coordinator system.

7. The UNDP Resident Representative in Senegal outlined the resource mobilization strategy undertaken in that country. It included UNDP focus on the development of national strategies primarily in the areas of poverty alleviation and capacity-building for economic development management.

8. The Resident Representative in Rwanda gave an overview of UNDP assistance to the devastated public sector in Rwanda following the events of 1994. Massive efforts were needed to restore national capacity, including rehabilitation of public buildings and the public service system, and training of civil service. He thanked donors who had contributed to the Trust Fund for Rwanda.

9. The Resident Representative in Uganda said that country-specific experience in the programme approach had been utilized in that country. Results of a recent review of all ongoing projects was a clustering of projects which had the same objectives and a plan to create a common training programme for their personnel. Clear entry points for external assistance needed to be identified, an area where the CSN could be a useful tool.

10. The Executive Board took note of the report of the Administrator on the role of the United Nations Development Programme in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (DP/1995/35).